The Workshop

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NO. 3. NEW SERIES.

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF ART-INDUSTRY PRODUCTIONS OF THE PRESENT DAY.*

By J. FALKE.

In respect of artistic endowment the local differences are less trenchant and characteristic. The fluctuations of fashion, talent, and favorable circumstances have here much influence. First in time and repute was the Meissner manufactory, which, so to speak, directed the porcelain style to the rococo, and was especially the standard for its plastic treatment. Then in the second half of the eighteenth century Sevres took the lead, with especial regard to the painting and the particular properties of the colors, while in the time of the French revolution and the first empire, when Sevres suffered from the circumstances of the times, the Vienna manufactory produced the best specimens in this direction. But in the course of the nineteenth century the great state factories fell off one after another with respect to taste, and when all eyes were turned again to Sevres and followed its example, it was not so much because of the excellence of its productions as because France was regarded as the special source of all taste. The shapes which Sevres was accustomed to display for vessels of state were the old stiff forms of the empire; the new ones, of an inferior kind, were fantastic and arbitrary, the creations of the fancy, not of the feeling of the Beautiful; the painting, where again the flower was the chief element, was treated without regard to the peculiarities of the material or the requirements of a merely decorative kind, but only so as to give a faithful copy of the model, whether a picture or a natural object.

As in the other branches of Art-Industry, so here also, a reform could not be delayed as soon as the eye was opened to the futility of the former treatment. It came in a twofold shape; first, in the decoration of the porcelain itself; and secondly, by bringing into competition with it that which had then entirely lost all artistic treatment, namely *faïence,* and once more elevating it, and so inducing to productions according to ancient models. The impulse was here also from England, though in the second case France at the same time displayed much energy.

The forms of the porcelain vessels had become, as we have said, too stiff and ponderous, and moreover too fantastic and capricious, especially for articles of luxury of the second and third rank. The painted decorations suffered equally from a too great heaviness, and though the best specimens attempted the depth and boldness of oil-paintings they were always dry and heavy. Still, porcelain, notwithstanding its solidity, is a delicate and elegant material and requires therefore a tasteful and delicate treatment. The Rococo and Chinese styles were therefore more appropriate to it than the stiffness of the empire or the sturdy naturalism of the nineteenth century. Here was the point where reform was to place its lever. The Grecian terra cotta vessels and the lighter and more pleasing specimens of the majolica afforded the best models for form, to be modified, however, for modern use, and in harmony with the material, which allowed a much more delicate treatment. To these forms and to the configuration of plates, cups, vases, ewers etc., such delicate ornaments were to be added as were practicable, for the coloring of which the oriental porcelain could be a standard. Even the painted figures were necessarily treated in a light and graceful manner.

* See ante p. 17.

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We will not take upon ourselves to decide whether England had a full perception of these principles, but it is certain that she entered on the path of reform in this direction, and her last Exhibition displayed numerous successful specimens of the most important manufactories, those of Copeland, Minton, Philipps and others. The glazed white faïence followed, and Wedgewood with his peculiar yellowish material now called after his name. As to France, the manufacturers of Limoges have for the most part entered on the same path. For the imperial manufactory of Sevres which has, at present, turned its attention to larger objects of luxury, this style is too simple, too little calculated for display, and so its colossal exhibition of 1867 showed a marked preponderance of the ancient, and now almost antiquated treatment, a few only of the smaller objects, painted by the most eminent artists, standing out in advantageous contrast to the rest. Now for the first time the Austrian manufacturers have begun to cast their eyes in this direction. In the Paris Exhibition they did not yet shew, with the exception of one specialty, that they understood the real and merits of the case, and so it was also with the German private factories. The royal manufactory of Berlin, already designated to become one of the leading institutions, had made laudable efforts and attempted novelties, but evinced an entire want of perception of the end to be attained and the means of attaining it, while her artistic tendency had even overshot the mark. The same thing had happened to the Meissner manufactory with its Rafaëlite plates, and it was only in its imitations of the Limoges enamel of the sixteenth century in its own peculiar dark blue color that it introduced any successful novelty. One specialty is that of Fischer of Herend in Hungary, who reproduced with wonderful skill every kind of old porcelain.

There were also specialties of a remarkable kind in other countries, which otherwise follow the stream, and present no rule in the manufacture of porcelain. Sweden may boast of producing the most delicate and artistic biscuit-works of an ornamental kind, which are however too brittle and elaborate to be capable of a wide application. Denmark unites to her biscuit-work the classical tendency of her Art, and the manufactories of Limoges seem also to have a predilection for the same work. The factory of Ginori at Doccia near Florence, which we shall have to consider in respect of faïence, has recalled to life an old forgotten specialty of the Neapolitan factory of Capo di Monte, that of porcelain vessels with colored representations in relief; while in Spain, at Seville for example, the ornaments and forms of the old Moorish faïence vessels, and their wall-decorations have been applied to porcelain though hitherto with but little success.

The second consequence, as we have before remarked, of the efforts to improve the porcelain manufactory was the revival of that of faïence. The feeling which called it forth was a just one, though perhaps it was carried too far. The show and ornamental vessels of the former time could not as porcelain absolutely satisfy an artistically educated taste, and yet there were wanted many ornaments of this kind for dwellings and gardens.

The porcelain looked cold and insipid, while the connoisseurs and collectors found an especial beauty in the old majolica, and in the German and French earthenwares of the sixteenth century, which for the most part were wrought with less artistic perfection, but displayed a simple but deep and satisfactory harmony of color and artistic shape, notwithstanding the general roughness of the work. It was no wonder therefore that reform, now feeling its way, threw itself into imitations of these, and that the counterfeits met with great and widely extended success, though the manufacture was confined within certain limits, as the material was very inferior to porcelain in solidity, and therefore less appropriate for ordinary purposes. The special province of this modern earthenware consists in its decoration.

Imitations may have made the beginning, but in the modern majolica manufacture which has already found a home in Italy, France, England, Belgium, Portugal and we believe, in Sweden, this point has long been overpast. Most of the manufactories that have taken up this branch are to be found in France, but the most excellent productions are those of the above mentioned Ginori at Doccia, who has even succeeded in reproducing the ruby red and metallic glaze of Gubbio. But the movement did not stop with the Italian majolicas. The French earthenwares of the sixteenth century which are known under the name of Bernard Palissy displayed a greater scope for practical realisation. While the French, with Pull at their head, copied these in great numbers, the English, especially Minton, made use of them for new and original creations. Then were the charming encaustic vessels, so well known under the designation of Henri deux, imitated and copied in porcelain in France, England, Italy and Sweden. The oriental earthenware introduced an entirely new kind of work, the characteristic of which was a richness of effect produced by color, particularly that which was called Persian, but which really came from the island of Rhodes. The French make good use of this style and its motives in their cups, dishes, vases, lamps and other articles of furniture. The old Moorish earthenware has also tended frequently to excite emulation, the glazed tiles especially, called in Spanish Azulejos, have assisted in reviving in Europe and more especially in England, those charming and solid mural decorations. In Germany the manufactory of Villeroy and Bloch at Mettlach (Rhine province) is worthy of honorable mention.

In all these attempts there is the element of artistic and material success. This cannot however be predicated of the revival of the glazed white French earthenwares of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as at present attempted, for these are mere imitations of porcelain, and as far inferior to it as the material itself. Nothing but archæologic trifling, the last collecting-mania, has brought into repute and esteem these earthenwares which seldom possess any artistic value.

If they are used at all at present as table articles it is but from a passing fancy.

In the same manner, the imitation of the Grecian and Italian terra cotta vessels, so far as they are mere copies, can only be looked upon as a kind of archæologic extravagance. It can be in this shape of little value for the improvement and development of modern Art-Industry, at most, it may in single cases assist in awakening in the public mind a sentiment of form. Such imitations are made in many places. The best are those of Copenhagen where also the terra cotta manufactory from the plastic designs of Thorwaldsen and his school are worthy of honorable mention.

The attention bestowed on this should turn to the advantage of another cognate branch of Industry which stands in pressing need of it, namely the jugs, bowls, and similar vessels of grey, blue and brown stoneware, such as are manufactured in the Rhine province, especially at Coblenz. This has been an important trade for centuries, proof of which may be found in the numerous specimens still extant from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, grand favorites with collectors of a common stamp, showing sometimes a sound, generally a bold, and often a delicate sentiment of form, with much pains bestowed upon them, to endow them with a certain artistic finish, and at the same time to render them popular. This manufacture is now altogether neglected as an art, but whoever is acquainted with the beer-drinking regions of South Germany knows that it is an important branch of Art-Industry, and that it would well and agreably repay the trouble of directing the attention of Art to it again. As to the manner in which this should be done, the old specimens of the sixteenth century are sufficiently instructive, and an artistic intelligence which can distinguish between the essential and the nonessential may make use of the antique vessels with great advantage, as was shown in the most eminent manner in the Paris Exhibition by the English stonewares of Doulton, which united forms almost classical with elegance of workmanship and moderation in price.

A similar attempt might be made in many of those earthenware vessels of common or even of less common use, and indeed they much need it, but above all, as we have been speaking of Germany, we should consider how to treat artistically that most important piece of furniture for the dwelling room, which constitutes also the potter's greatest task, the stove. The chimney piece is comparatively more carefully treated; moreover it stands in close connexion with the architecture of the house, while the stove is an independent article of furniture whose harmony with the rest is generally little thought of; the prevailing shape is also altogether supposed to be stereotyped, and yet, favored as it is by its design and material, it invites a completely artistic treatment. The scope of its colors is certainly very limited, but still these are favorable to the harmony of the apartment, as the old green, brown and colored specimens shew. Had stoves been in use in England and France, we should probably have had already to announce a decided and energetic reform with respect to them, but as they are German only, the reform advances but slowly, until its time arrives.

METAL-WORK.

In those branches of Art-Industry, which we have hitherto spoken of, namely Textile Fabrics, Glass, Porcelain and Earthenware, there is a pronounced and decided difference of treatment which brings us readily to a clear understanding of each. This is only partly the case with the manifold and different Metal-manufactures, looking at them, as we do here, from an artistic point of view. Here also, there are marked national peculiarities, but as to the rest, Fashion reigns pre-eminent, and indeed so much the more in proportion as the branch of Art is one of mere luxury; no wonder therefore that France is pre-eminent in this respect. In proportion as Iron has predominated in Europe, it appears to have been forsaken by Art. This is partly owing to the more widely extended use of cast-iron, which has hitherto shown itself proof against its attentions, and for which the delicate craft of the smith has been neglected. Lately indeed, cast-iron has begun be treated artistically, mostly in larger plastic figures and groups, in which iron has been rendered serviceable to high art. So now large balustrades for balconies and windows are cast from the designs of architects, as may be seen in the Paris houses. A successful technical finish will be recognised in both cases, but still Iron is an ungrateful material for high plastic art, and cast-iron ornaments when detached and exposed are liable to break upon the first blow. The foundry of Stolberg at Ilsenburg, which displays no little skill in its kind, has opened for itself a new path, in copying in cast, the wrought, hammered and embossed works of the old metallurgy of the finer kind, the productions of the old armorers, brassfounders and goldsmiths. These imitations, excellent of their kind, are very praiseworthy, still they are only copies and even as such not always useful.

In olden times the locksmith's productions were real works of Art; locks and hinges hammered, filed, embossed and etched, then works of greater magnitude, screens, panels, fountains, finials, gates etc.; but all these had passed out of date, screens were cast, not wrought, and the locks and hinges were inlaid into the woodwork, and therefore hidden from sight, so that any artistic ornamentation became superfluous. Where any desire for this existed, the amateur was obliged to be content with a brass handle and plate, a very modest and ordinary taste. Now however there is much opposition in movement against this; England has begun to devote much attention to the iron-work of doors and has entered on the right path by studying the models of the ancient workmen, but what we have seen of this kind, is still too ponderous and massive, and is destitute of that freedom and elegance which the locksmiths of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave to their creations. The more recent French works of this kind are not ob-

noxious to the same reproach; on the contrary, they are often too elaborate, naturalistic and unconventional, being wrought in direct opposition to the peculiarities of the material. The English works of a larger sort have been more successful, e. g. fire-irons, candelabra, grilles etc., many of which are so simple and conformable to their purpose that they seem to have grown naturally to their destination. Wrought iron screens, panels, hinges of great beauty and artistic value are now being produced under the direction of the architects of Vienna, Berlin, Nurenberg and elsewhere, but the smaller articles, such as locks and door handles, are by no means a success.

Here at least some beginnings have been made, but if we inquire for the peculiar ornamentation of the more delicate iron-work, for damascening and etching, we look in vain for them among the nations who take the lead in modern Art-Industry, and must cast our eyes to the remotest ends of Europe. The art of beating one metal into another, the more precious into the less, is originally oriental, but was practised during the sixteenth century by all armorers and goldsmiths with no less skill, and is now only known to Spain and Russia in the western world. In the Paris Exhibition were to be seen of Madrid workmanship, arms, shields, besides all kinds of writing materials and vessels of steel with inlaid ornaments of wrought gold and silver, in the old style and of excellent execution. We are unable to state whether the art was traditional, or only revived, but in Russia the so-called Tulaar-work of silver inlaid in steel is a proof of an uninterrupted continuation of an ancient method peculiar to the country, showing a strong affinity to similar works of the east. The arms of our times, iron chests and strong boxes have the greatest need of this style of workmanship, though hitherto no attempts have been made to treat them in this way.

(To be continued.)

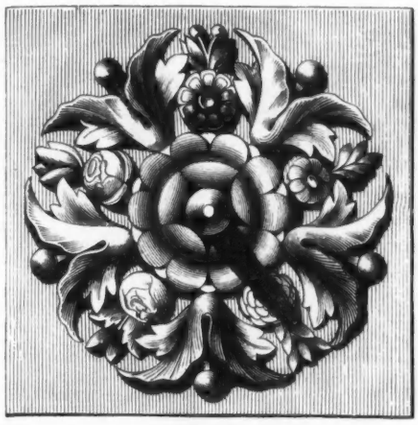
SPECIMENS OF ORNAMENTATION.

No. 1.

No. 2.

No. 3.

Nos. 1—3. From Perugia. Sixteenth century. Carved Panels from the Stalls in San Pietro Church; finished 1535 by Stefano da Bergamo.



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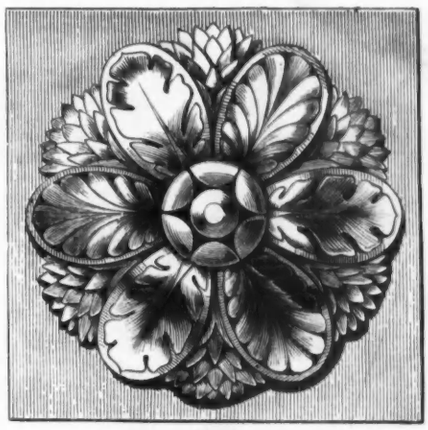

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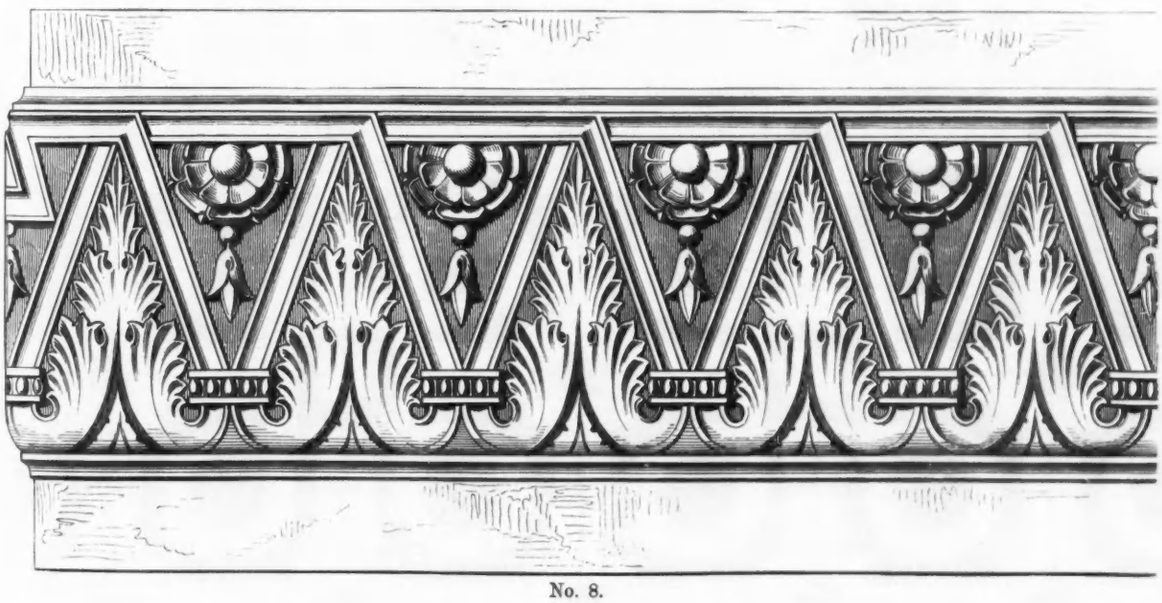
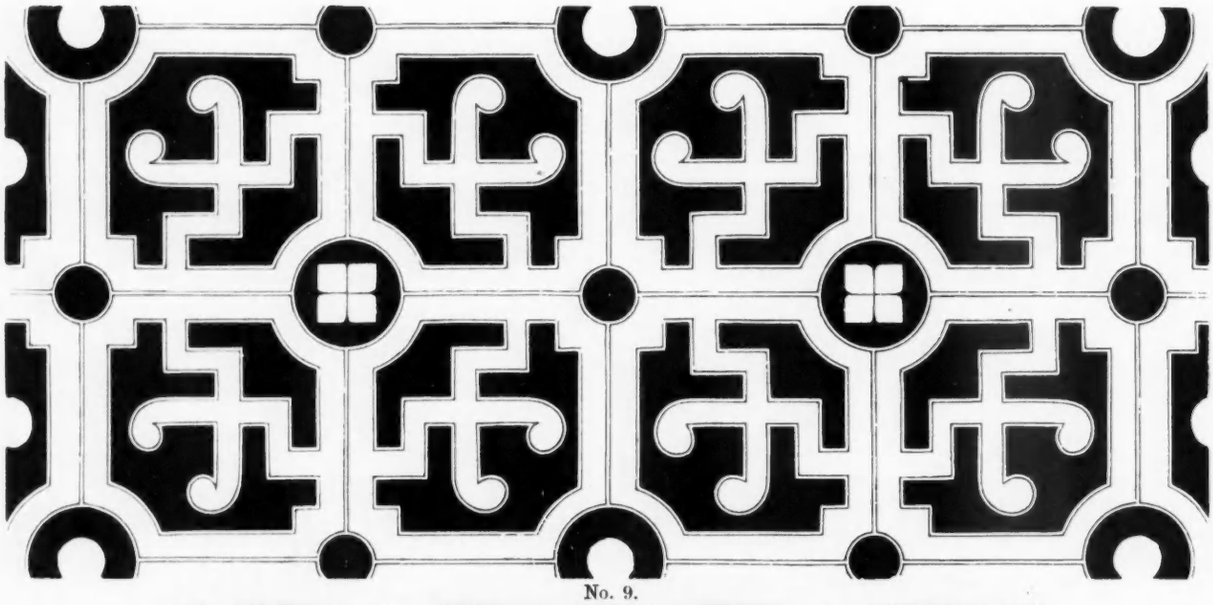


No. 8.

Nos. 4 and 5. Italian. Twelfth century. Flowers from the Door of Parma Baptistery.
Nos. 6 and 7. Italian. Sixteenth century. Capitals from the court of Scrofa Palace, Ferrara.
No. 8. Modern. Enriched Band by M. Villeminot, Paris.



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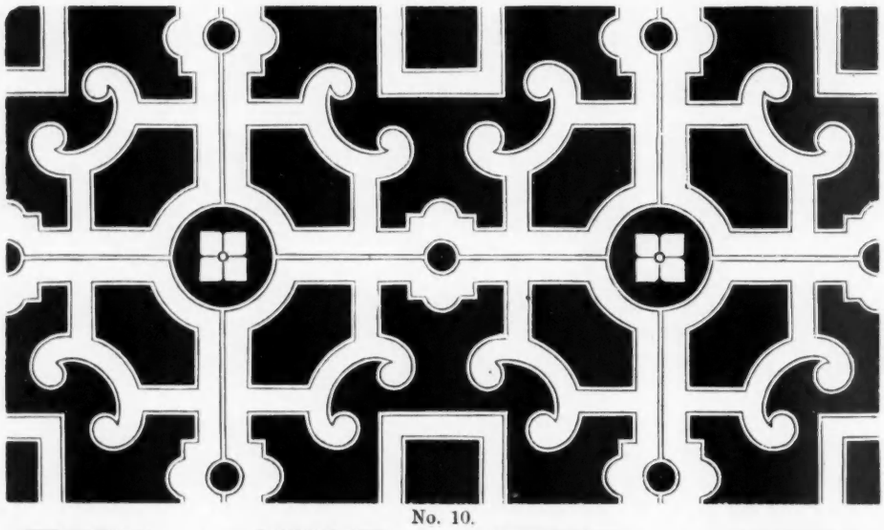

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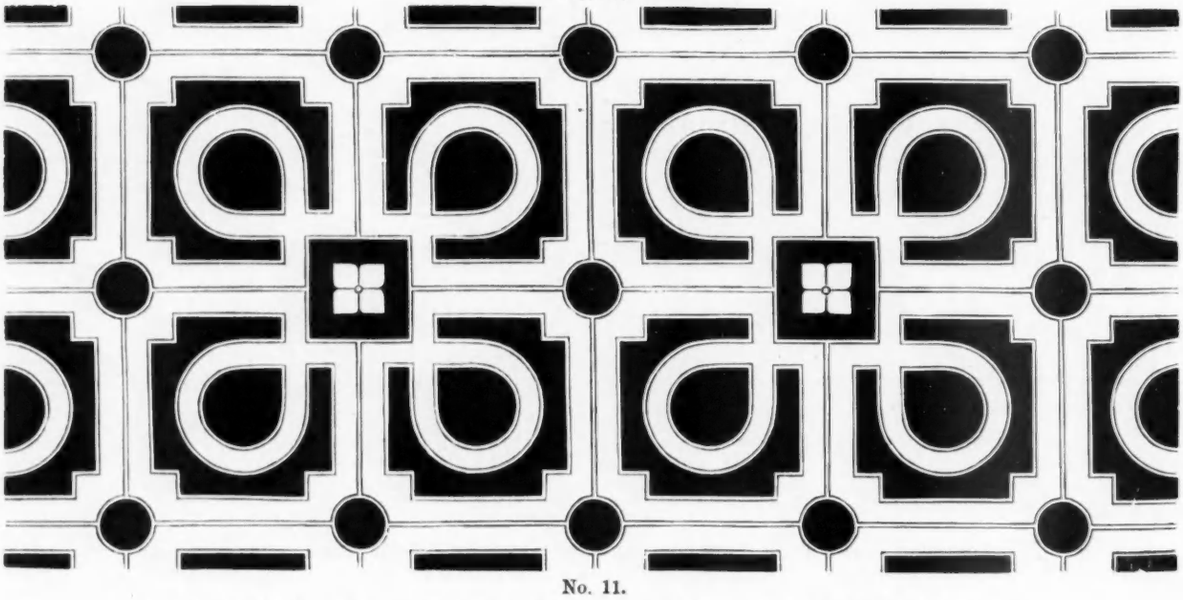
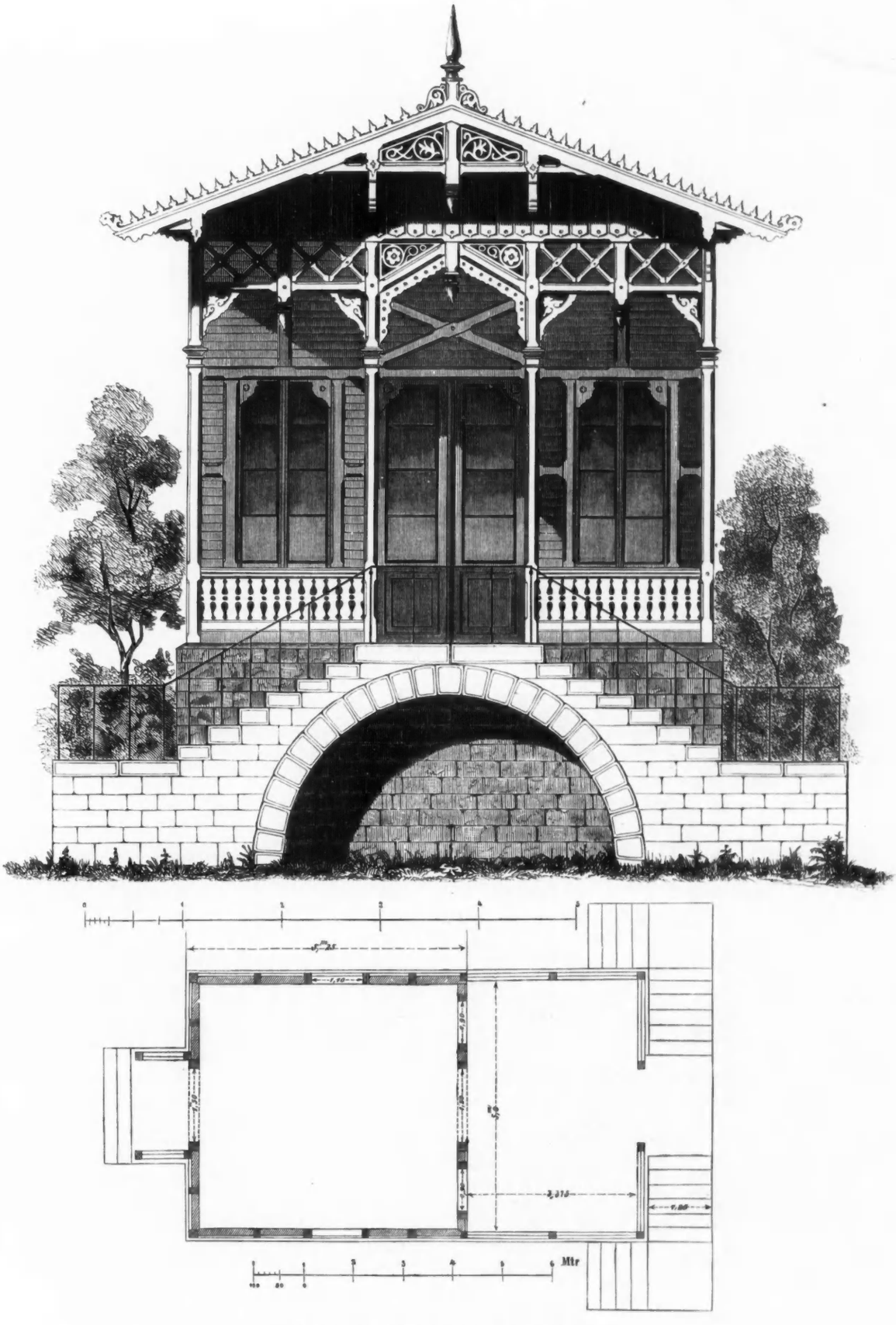
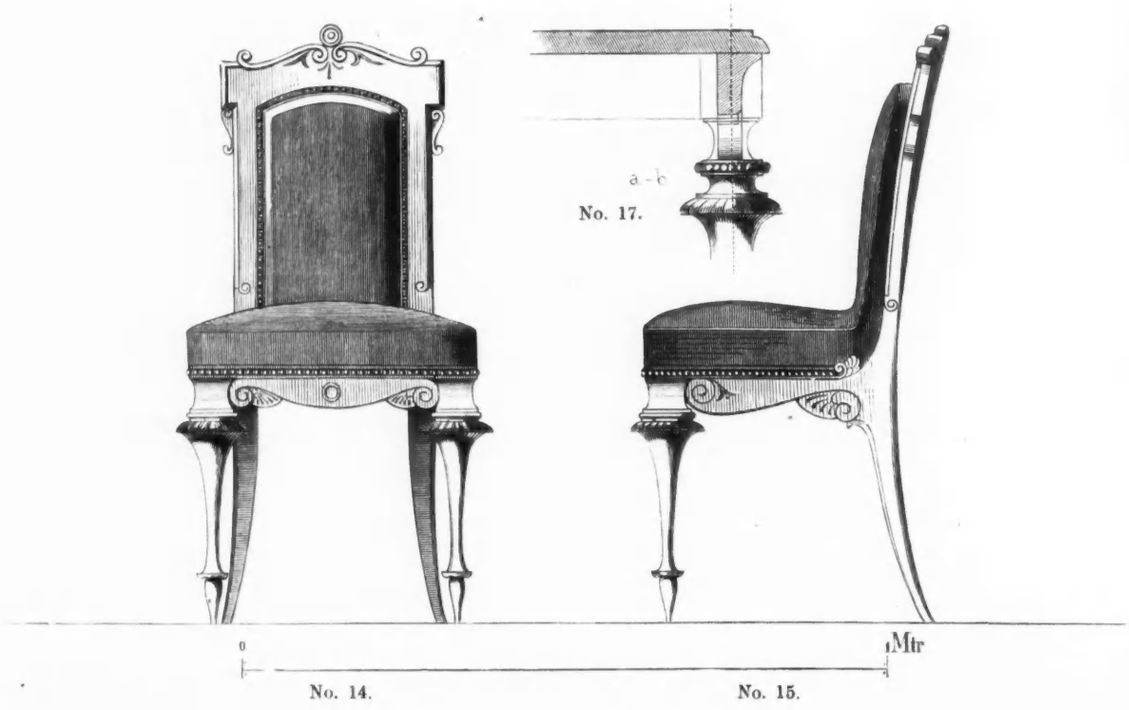


No. 11.

Nos. 9—11. Modern. Patterns for Inlayed Work, Parquet Floors, etc. Prof. E. Herdtle, Stuttgart.

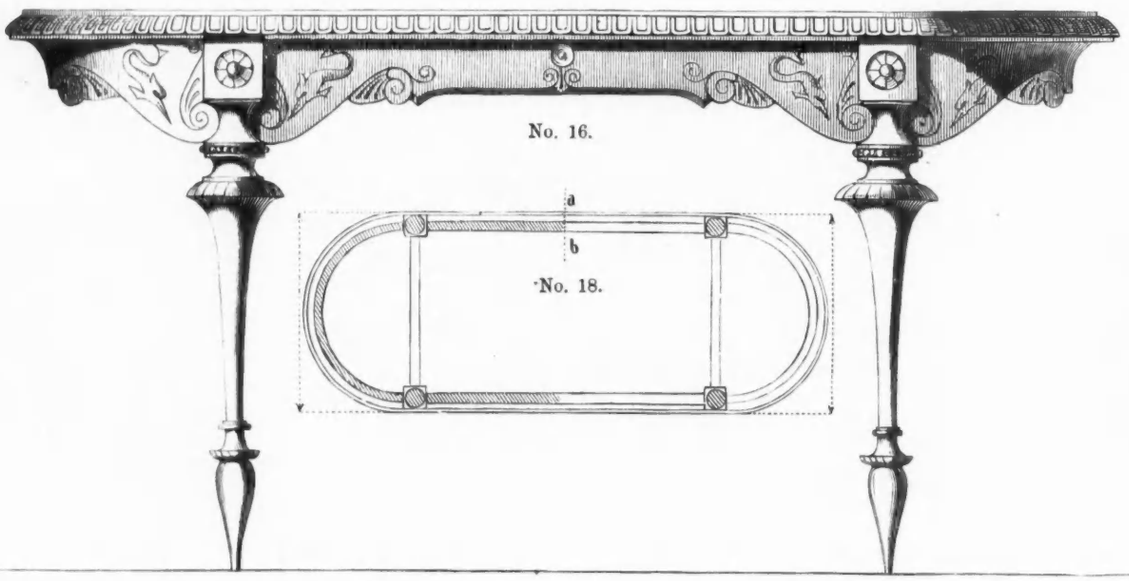


Nos. 12 and 13. Design of a Summer House.
Full-size details, Nos. 1—3 of Supplement.



No. 17.

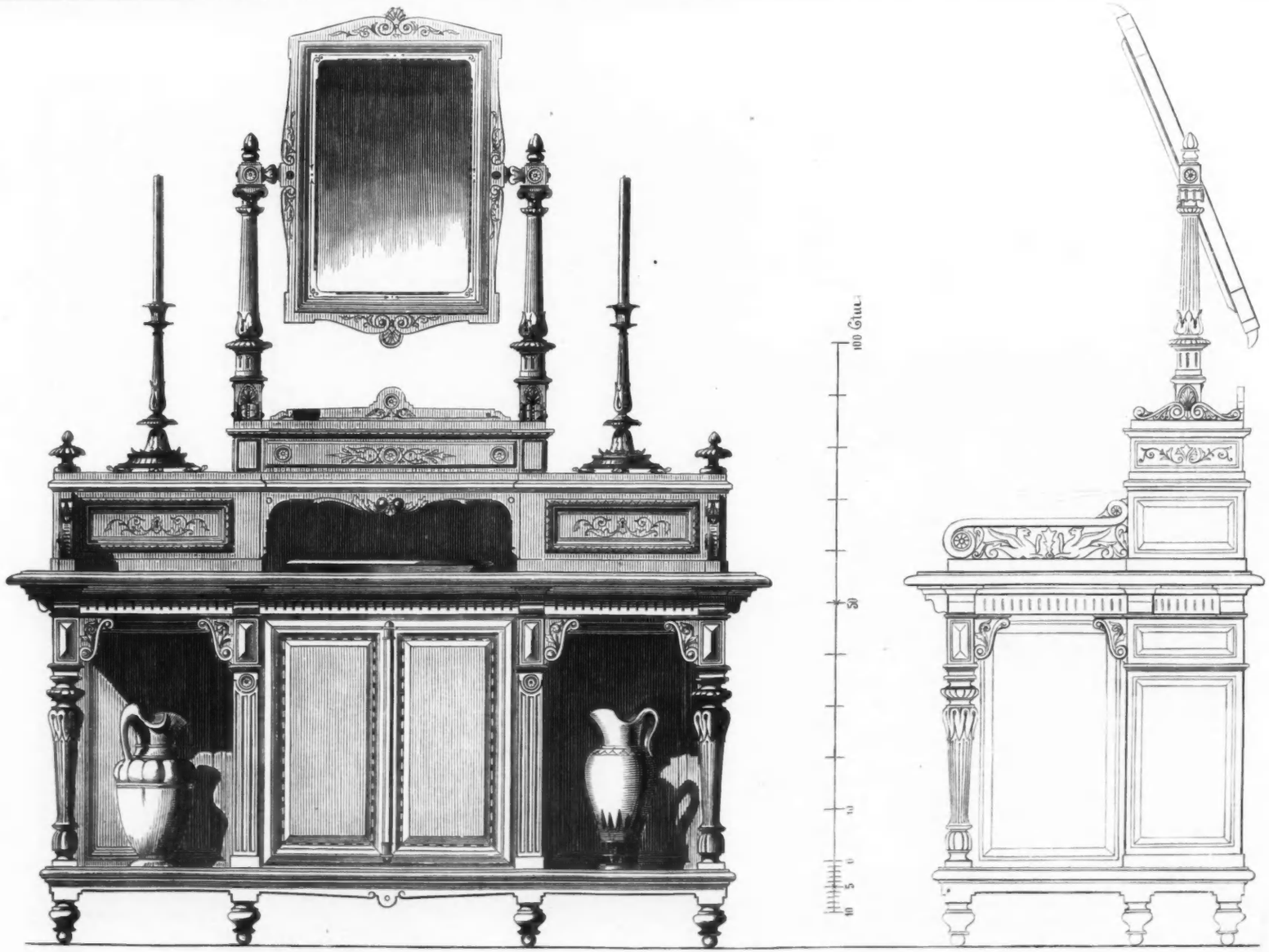
No. 14. No. 15.



No. 16.

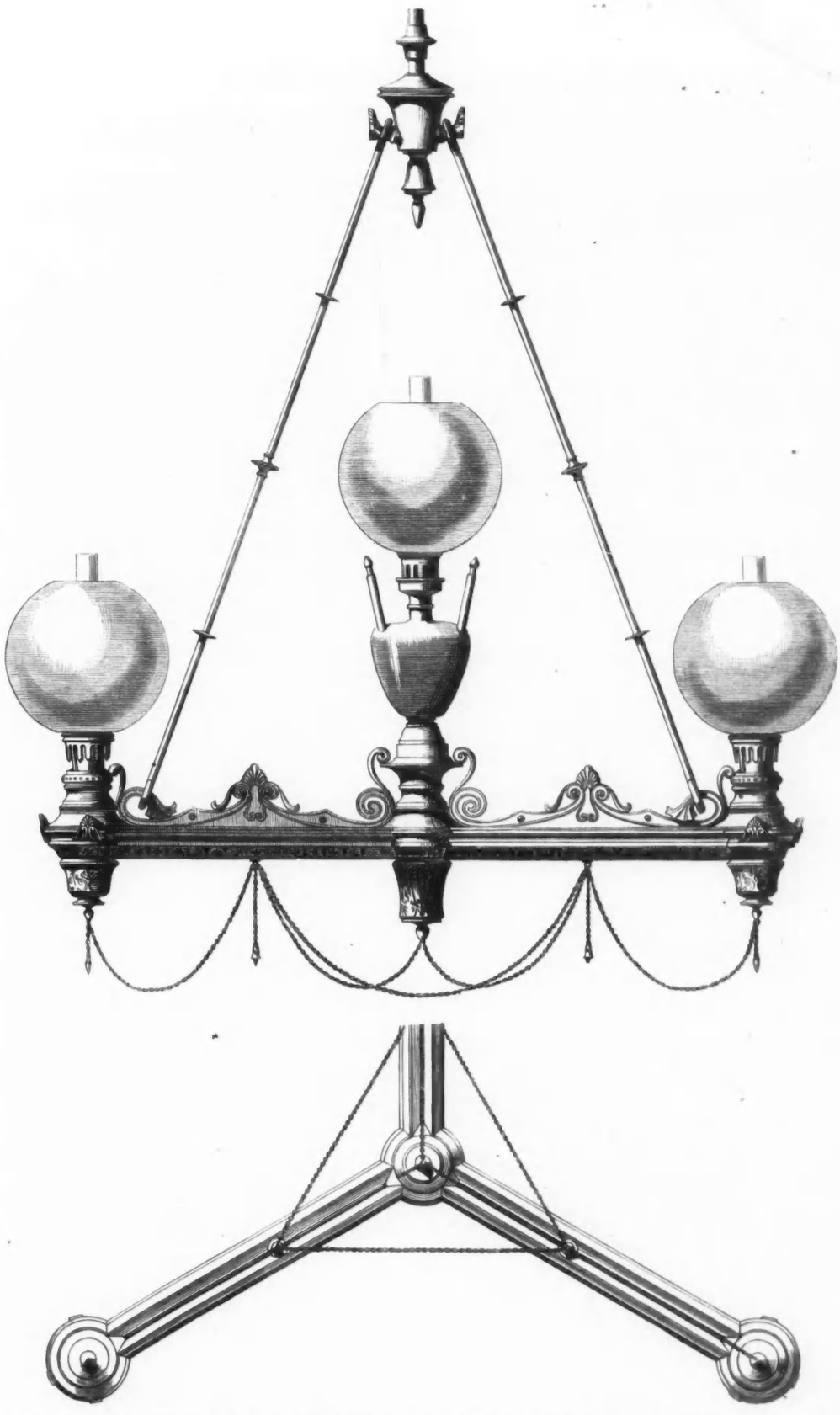
No. 18.

Nos. 14—18. Dining-Room Furniture, Stuffed Chair and Table in stained Oak. Dark green velvet coverings with silver nails.
Mr. Jos. Durm, Archt., Carlsruhe.
Full-size details Nos 5—7 of Supplement.

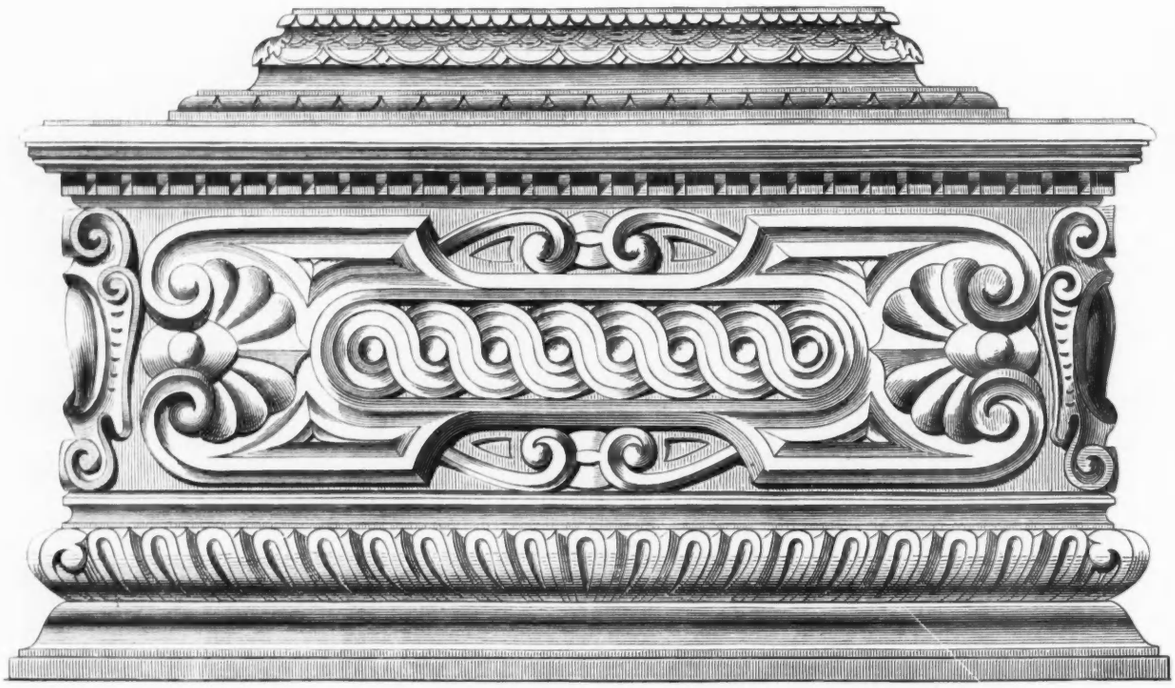


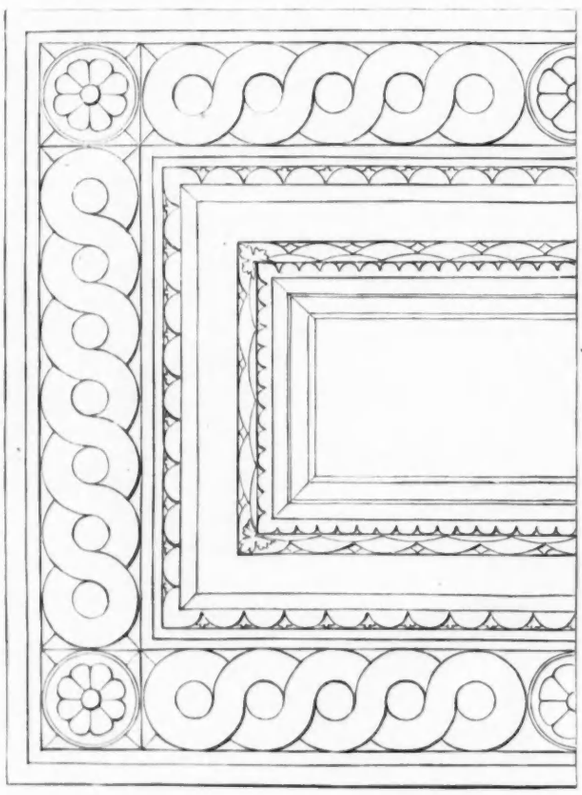
Nos. 19 and 20. Design of a Washhand-Stand by Mr. E. Torge, Archt., Vienna.
To be executed in plain oak or walnut, the ornaments *in cavetto* and picked out in color. Details No. 8 of Supplement.

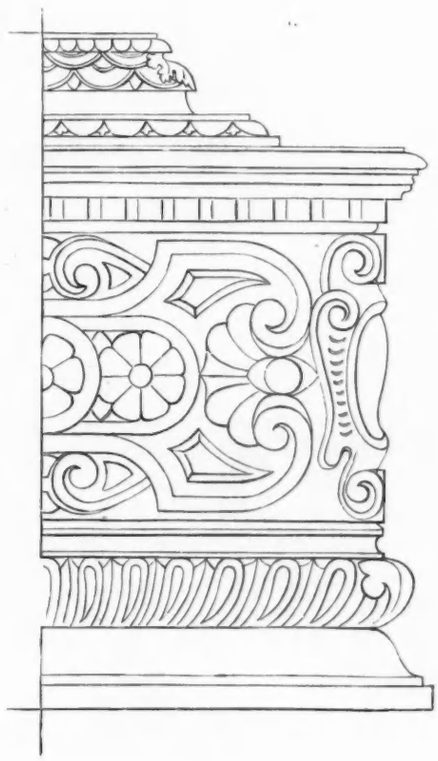
Nos. 21 and 22. Exhibition of the *"Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'Industrie,"* Paris 1869:
Cabinet in the Style of Louis XVI designed and executed in maple by M. Semey, Paris.
The side-panels instead of being carved may be filled in with glass, as shown by the difference of arrangement in the design.



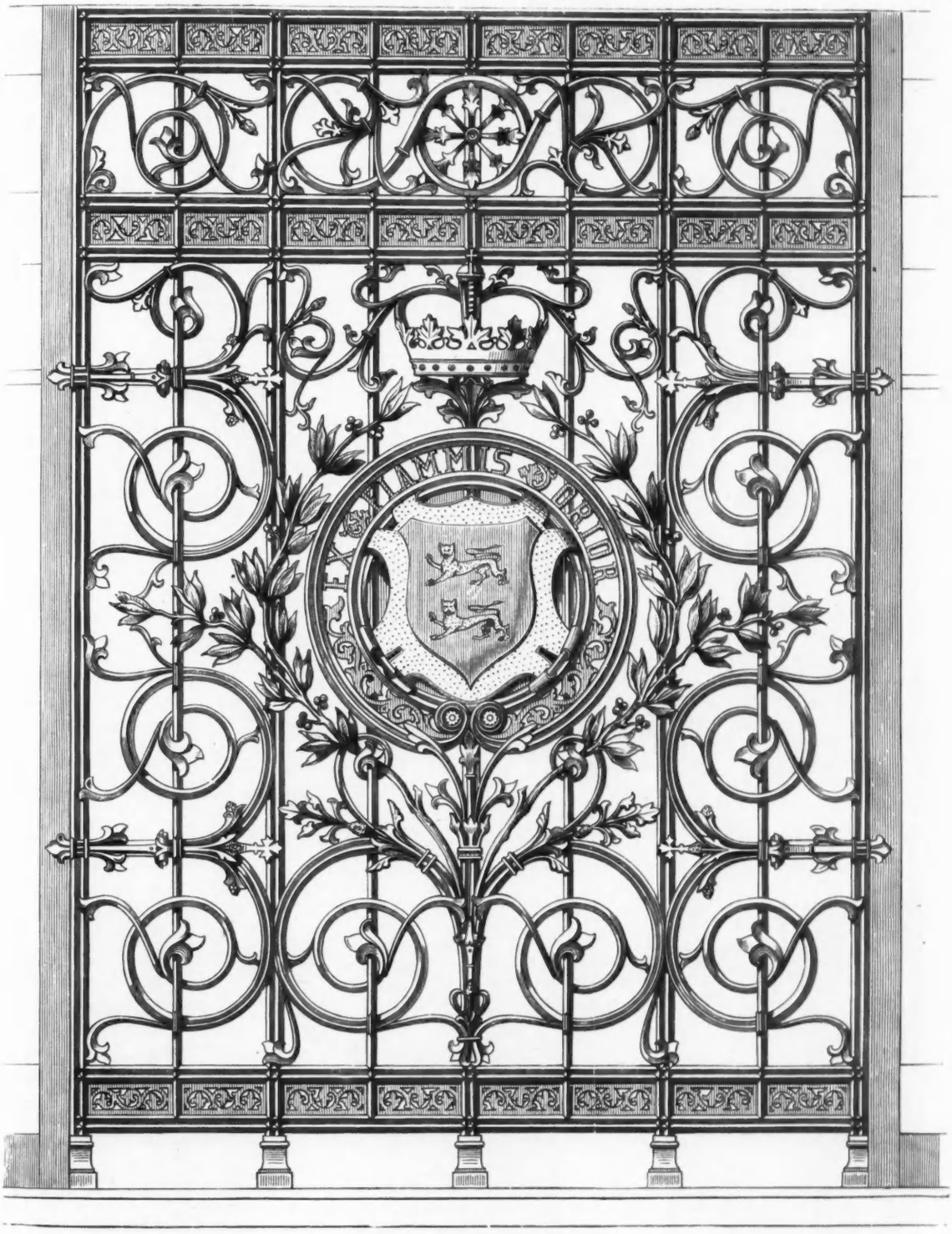
Nos 23 and 24. Bronze Gaselier in the Pompeian House of Prince Napoleon. M. A. Normand, Archt., Paris
Details in No. 4 of Supplement.



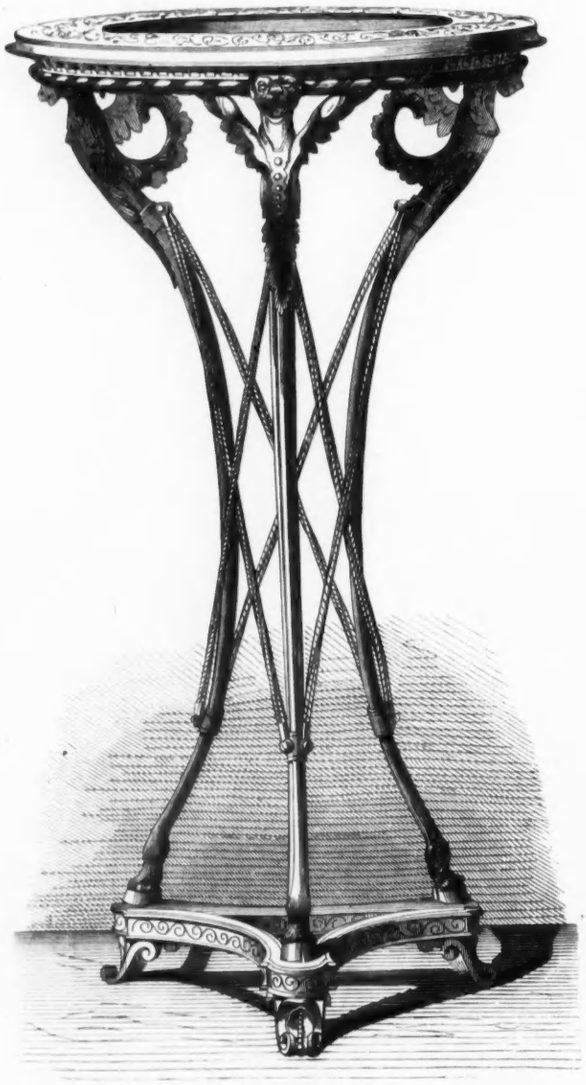




Nos. 25—27. Florentine, sixteenth century. Casket in Walnut Wood. South Kensington Museum. $^{2}/_{5}$ full-size.



No. 28. Chimney Screen, wrought from sheets of copper gilt. Mr. Wernicke, Archt., Breslau



No. 29.

No. 30.

No. 31.

No. 32.

No. 29. Little Bronze Table in form of a tripod supporting a flat vase.
No. 30. Fancy Table in Bronze with a vase for the reception of cards, etc.
Nos. 31 and 32. Modern. Design of Gas-Bracket by Mr. W. Genutat, Berlin.

Nos. 33—35. Tassels.

Nos. 36—40. Roman Jewellery, manufactured by Mr. C. Ansorge, Rome.

VARIOUS.

Gluing in Veneers.

I have advised the use of waterproof cements for fine inlaying, so that dampness will not affect them, but as this is not always convenient, it is well to make the glue so that it can be used and the work finished off in a short time. This is easily done by making the glue as thick as it will run, or so that it is like a jelly. If applied in this condition, it will set hard in thirty minutes and the work may be cut down without fear or danger of its moving. I have done this frequently, in order to see what kind of work I was making. Always put a clamp on your work wherever you can, for although the glue will adhere of itself to the wood, it adheres much more strongly if pressed down by a clamp. Also, never put a veneer on a piece of work that is uneven, for although it may set square under the pressure of the clamp, when you come to scrape it, it will give way and yield to the inequalities, and when varnished and polished, will be full of depressions.

Don't be afraid to rub down with sand paper, under the impression that you are spoiling the work, but let the varnish get thoroughly dried, and be hard before you attempt it. Be sure, also, to remove every particle of varnish if you touch it at all, otherwise that which remains will take a coat while the bare wood will not take so much, and you will have a surface full of scars and ridges. It is not necessary to touch the wood in rubbing down, but go down to the wood, so that a waxy appearance is presented, and you will have a handsome finish that will add greatly to the beauty of the work. White holly is easily soiled when used in connection with ebony, by the dust from it, and it will be necessary to rub it, or scrape it delicately, before varnishing, without touching the ebony.

Watson's Manual of the Hand Lathe.

Liquid Glue.

The preparation of liquid glue is based upon the property of the concentrated acid of vinegar and diluted nitric acid to dissolve the gelatine without destroying its cohesive qualities. Dumoulin has given the following recipe. He prepares his »liquid and unalterable glue« in a pint of water, and then gradually adding three and a half ounces of nitric acid of 36° Beaumé. Effervescence takes place under generation of nitrous gas. When all the acid has been added, the liquid is allowed to cool.

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Fehling has analyzed various kinds of liquid glue, the better kinds of which only became liquid by placing the bottles in tepid water, the more inferior kinds, however, were liquid at the ordinary temperature.

Russian glue — white, opaque, and solid at the common temperature — was found to consist of 35.6 per cent of dry glue; 4.1 per cent of sulphate of lead; 1.4 per cent of hydrated nitric acid; 53.9 per cent of water. Total 100 parts.

It may be prepared by softening one hundred parts of the best glue in one hundred parts of warm water and then adding slowly from five and a half to six parts of aqua fortis, and finally six parts of powdered sulphate of lead. The latter is used in order to impart to it a white color.

Pale »steam glue« consists of 27 per cent of dry glue; 1.9 per cent of sulphate of lead; 2.5 per cent of hydrated nitric acid; 68.6 per cent of water. Total, 100 parts. It is prepared by dissolving one hundred parts of glue in double its weight of water, and adding twelve parts of aqua fortis.

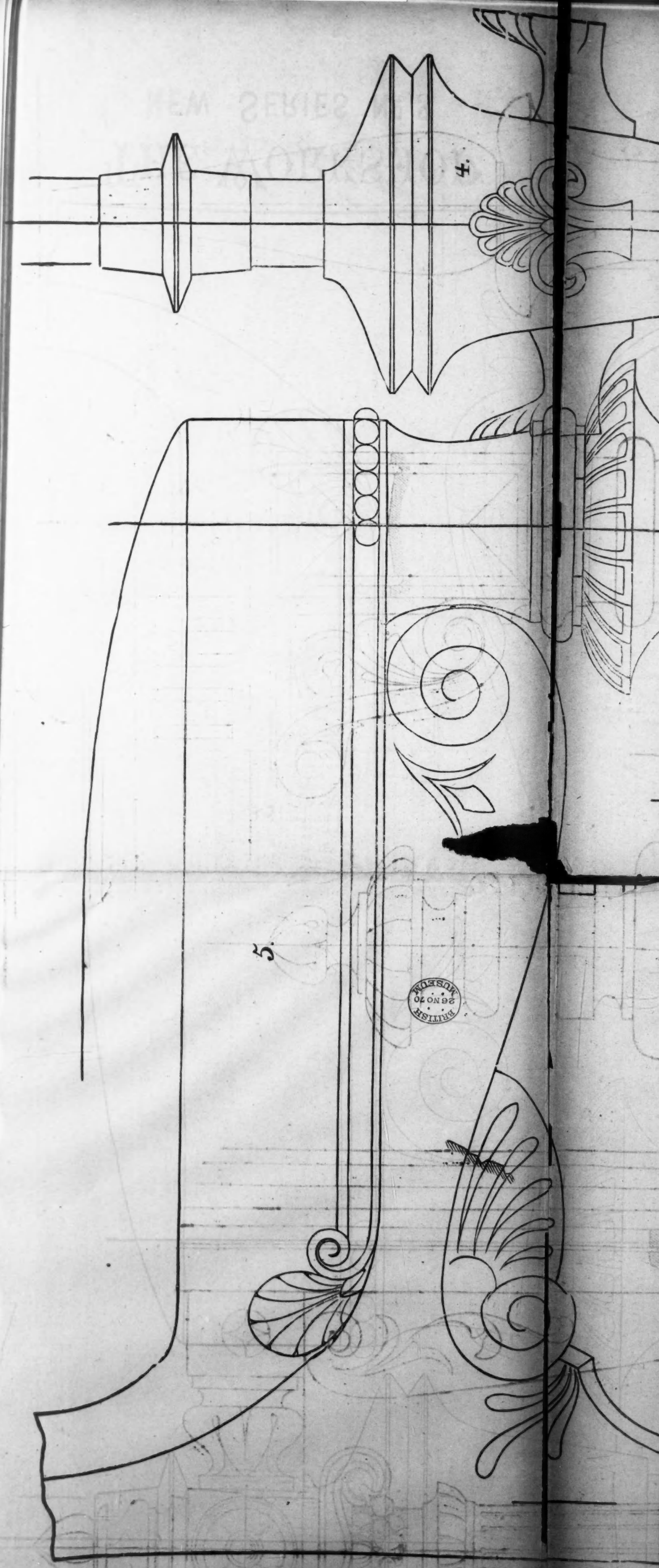
Dark »steam glue« contained 35.5 per cent of dry glue; 3.5 per cent of hydrated nitric acid; 61 per cent of water, and can be obtained from one hundred parts of glue, one hundred and forty parts water, and sixteen parts of aqua fortis. This liquid glue exhibits a greater cohesive force than that prepared after Dumoulin's recipe. However, still better kinds of liquid glue or mucilage are obtained by dissolving gelatin or dextrin in acetic acid and alcohol.

Coating of Wood.

The following is a German recipe for coating wood with a substance as hard as stone: 40 parts of chalk, 50 of resin, and 4 of linseed-oil, melted together; to this should be added one part of oxide of copper, and afterwards one part of sulphuric acid. This last ingredient must be added carefully. The mixture, while hot, is applied with a brush.

Black Paint for Ironwork.

A varnish for iron work can be made as follows: Obtain some good clean gas tar, and boil for four or five hours, until it runs as fine as water; then add one quart of turpentine to a gallon of tar, and boil another half hour. Apply hot.



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THE WORKSHOP

NEW SERIES № 3.

4.

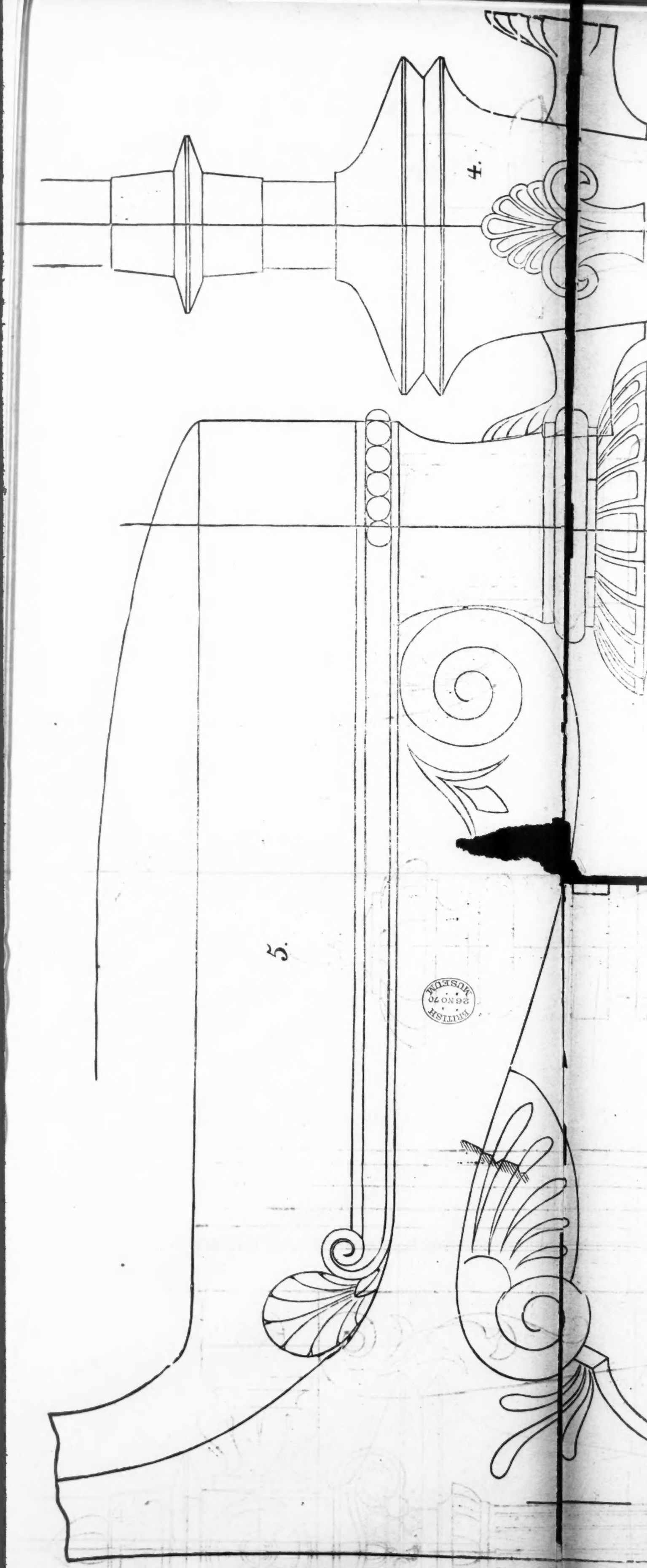

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FIG 1 PART 2

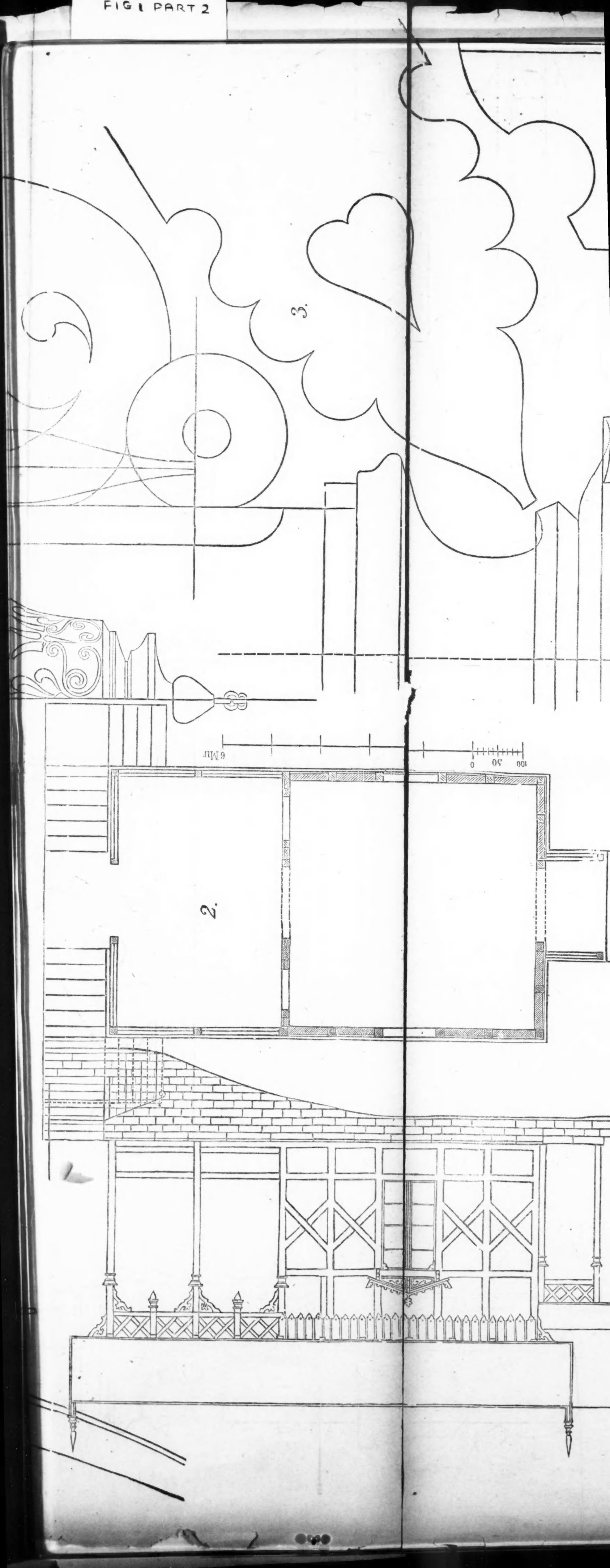

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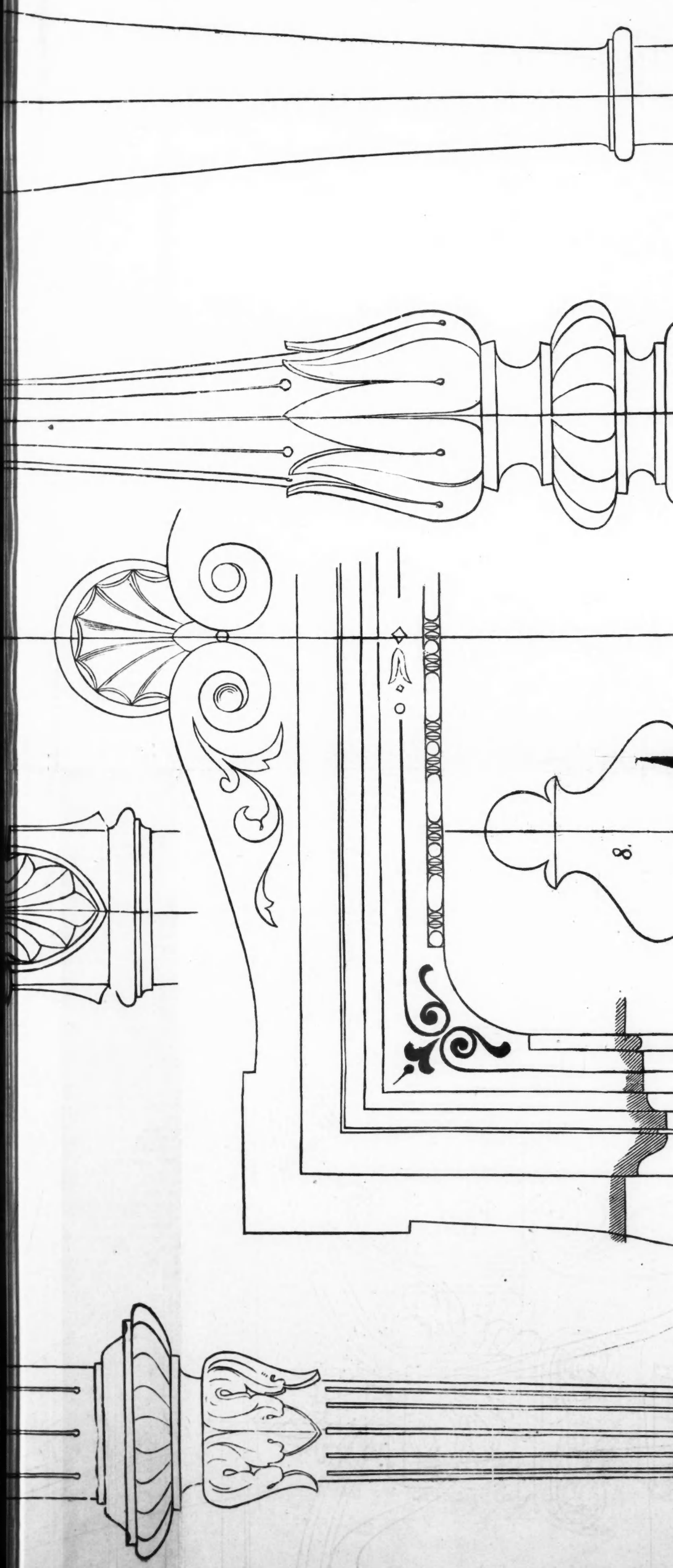
FIG. 2 PART 1



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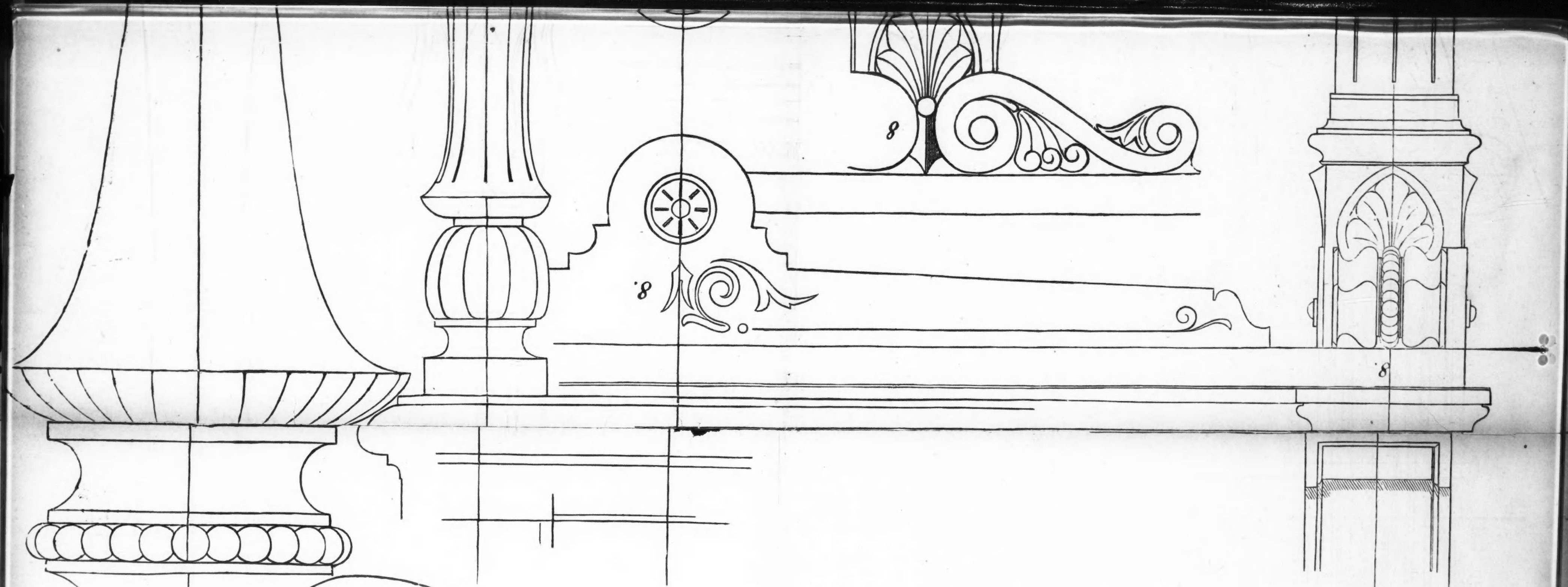
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